

Will You Marry Me?

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Summary: Nala is kidnapped by a flirtatious cub called Prince Haiba, who tries to get her to marry him. Will Nala say yes?

Chapter 1: Chapter 1: Do We Seem Strange?

AN: I quite like this next story. Catches your attention, doesn't it? Well, go on, then. Read! Don't let me stop you.

Will You Marry Me?

Chapter One: Do We Seem Strange?

"So who do you think it was?" Nala asked, as she and Simba lay beside the water hole, snuggled up to each other. "Who do you think made you grow up?"

Simba shrugged. "I don't know. Tama said she didn't do it, and since she's turned good now I guess I have to take her word for it. Without any proof, there's nothing to say that she's the one who made me grow up."

"Maybe she wanted revenge for you defeating her," Nala suggested. "If I was an evil, selfish, greedy cub then that's what I would have done. I wouldn't be surprised if she was lying to you."

"Nah. I didn't defeat her – she defeated *herself*," Simba told her. "She realised that what she was doing was wrong, so she stopped. I know she roughed you up, Nala, but I don't think she's going to be causing any more trouble for us."

"I don't know..." Nala narrowed her eyes in suspicion. "I'm still not too sure. So if Tama didn't do it, then who *did*?"

"Beats me," said Simba. "Could have been anyone. They probably got so scared of me that they ran away," he said cockily.

Nala rolled her eyes. "Simba, you are such a cocky cub. You think other people are scared of you, when one of your worst fears is spiders?"

Simba shuddered. "Don't mention those creepy things, Nala. It freaks me out just *thinking* about them. With the legs and the hair and..." He stuck his tongue out. "Yuck! If spiders want to take over the kingdom, then they can *have* it as far as I'm concerned."

"So much for your braveness," Nala remarked, smiling. "You're lucky you've got me, otherwise you'd *never* have a girlfriend."

"I wouldn't *want* another one," Simba replied, giving her a cheesy grin.

Aw... Nala thought, as she felt her heart warm up. Even when I'm teasing him he manages to be cute. I really couldn't have picked a better guy to fall in love with, could I?

"Okay, you got me," Nala admitted. "Your cuteness is just completely irresistible, Simba. I can't even make fun of you without you melting my heart. How do you even do it?"

"Aw, it's nothing," Simba said casually, going into another one of his cocky speeches. "It's just that when you're the greatest hero who ever lived you tend to pick up a few tricks – cuteness... strength... huge muscles."

Nala laughed. "'Huge muscles'?" she exclaimed, giggling. "Simba, an *ant* has more muscles than you do." She patted his stomach. "Just look at that belly. You sure eat a lot, don't you?"

"Hey, I like to eat after a hard, tiring day," said Simba, covering his face with a paw. "You should feel sorry for a poor, defenceless cub like me."

"A minute ago you were the greatest hero in the world," Nala reminded him. "And now all of a sudden you're poor and defenceless? You seem to change your personality a lot, Simba."

Simba laughed. "So what about you, Nala? Are you the most *perfect* cub who ever lived?"

"Nope," said Nala, closing her eyes and shaking her head. "I'm *more* than perfect!" she proclaimed, a big grin on her face. "I'm a fun, caring, kind, adventurous, beautiful cub. No one can beat that!"

"Let's admit it – we're *both* too cocky," said Simba with a smile.

The two cubs laughed. "Yeah, I guess so," Nala admitted through laughter. "Our egos are way too big."

They lay there in silence for a few moments, just listening to the sounds of birds tweeting. It was a quiet, peaceful day in the Pride Lands. Simba and Nala had hardly been doing anything but relaxing. They needed a rest after yesterday, which needless to say had been *more* than stressful for the two of them.

And it all started because of a tiny bit of red fur Simba found on top of his head. At first everyone thought he was showing the first signs of growing up – even though he was too young – but then it got much, *much* worse.

Simba woke up the next morning a teenager. A fully-grown teenager. The next time he went to sleep, he woke up as an adult. Then the next time, he woke up as an elderly lion on the brink of death! Luckily, thanks to Tama and her magic powers, Simba's youth was restored, making him a cub once more.

"Simba..." Nala began, giving him a look. "Do you ever get the feeling that we're weird?"

Simba looked at Nala, confused. "Huh?" he said. "What is that supposed to mean?"

"Well... it's just that I can't help but thinking that we're... strange," Nala told him, looking shyly down at the ground.

"You're not breaking up with me, are you?" Simba asked, an extremely worried look on his face. "*Please* say you're not breaking up with me!" he pleaded. "Are you breaking up with me? Well? *Are* you?"

Nala giggled and shook her head. "No, Simba. Nothing like that. I don't mean our *relationship* is strange. I just mean that... *we're* strange – as *people*. Do you get what I'm saying?"

Simba shook his head slightly. "I'm still thinking you're breaking up with me," he replied. "Just to warn you, I will throw myself off the top of Pride Rock if that ever happens."

"Simba, I'm *never* going to break up with you," Nala promised. "I'm just thinking that the two of us – and what we do – is a little... strange."

"Okay, explain it to me," Simba instructed. "Because my brain is still hurting a little after yesterday."

"It's just that we're kind of... lonely," Nala explained. "We always keep ourselves to ourselves. We never talk to anyone – except for our parents – and it makes us seem like freaks."

"So what you're saying is... since it's just the two of us, we're... freaks," Simba concluded, still a little confused.

"Pretty much," replied Nala with a nod. "How come we never talk to any of the other cubs?"

"Because they're all selfish, annoying and really, *really* mean," Simba responded. "That's the reason it's just us in the first place. Every other cub in this pride is a complete jerk."

"So we'll be on our own all the time," said Nala, frowning. "Just the two of us, with nobody else."

Simba looked upwards, and nodded. "Yep. I'd say so. But hey, I know what'll cheer you up." Simba gave her a quick kiss on the cheek.

Nala blushed. "Mr Cute does it again."

***Chapter 2*: Chapter 2: The Irresistible Prince Haiba**

Chapter Two: The Irresistible Prince Haiba

"Haiba, get up."

Here we go again, Prince Haiba thought. *Mom's waking me up from my daily six-hour nap so we can have another conversation about how this kingdom is dying a slow and horrible death. Man, I just love my life!*

"Haiba, get up!"

"Mom, give me ten more minutes. There's only so much complaints I can take from you today," replied Haiba, rolling over onto his stomach, his eyes still closed. "Haven't you got other people to shout at?"

"Don't you dare speak to me like that!" Amri, Haiba's mother, shouted, grabbing her cub violently by the neck. "How many times do I have to tell you to treat your mother with respect?"

"Five thousand and seventy-three," Haiba told her, smiling. "Since this is the most boring place in the world, I count how many times you tell me things."

"Why, you little..." Amri snarled, extending her claws, ready to strike her cub.

Haiba chuckled and shook his head. "Mom, Mom, Mom, I'm only kidding. Relax. Did I mention you look beautiful today? Dirt has never looked so good on a tanned fur coat like yours."

Amri allowed herself a little smile. "Why, thank you, Haiba. You certainly know how to impress your own mother. I wish I could say the same for each and every female cub I wanted you to marry."

"Yeah, and then there was that one male cub," Haiba said, smiling. "He was pretty hot – but you're missing the point. You're just wasting your breath when you're complaining to me. There I was, having the most lovely nap, and you started complaining like you always do. What do you want from me?"

"I want you to protect the future of this kingdom," Amri replied. "Ever since your father was eaten by that hungry rhinoceros we've lost our fighting spirit. We'll never be able to end our neverending war against the Pride Lands unless you resolve the problem!"

"Mom, there hasn't been a fight against the Pride Lands ever since Mufasa became the King – and that was years ago. Don't you think the kingdom has just... forgot about us?"

"No one forgets about the Grand Lands!" Amri declared, her bright green eyes glinting with passion. She dropped her cub to the ground. "We deserve to be affiliated with the Pride Lands, as decreed by the Great Kings of the Past!"

"Yes, yes, very dramatic, Mom," Haiba muttered, rolling his eyes. "Aunt Zira always said there'd be days like this. I'm not surprised she threw herself off the top of that cliff."

"I don't like the tone you're using, Haiba," said Amri sternly, staring hard into her cub's blue eyes. "That should be the tone you're using when you force a cub into marrying you!"

"Hey, I've tried all my best tricks, but nothing ever seems to work. All I've ended up with is twenty-seven consecutive slaps to the face. I think one of my cheeks is permanently red," said Haiba. "I really need to tie their paws together on my next date. It'll save me the pain."

Amri ruffled her cub's light-brown fur, chuckling. "That's the spirit, you flirtatious little thing. The only problem now is *finding* you another cub to marry. No one sounds interested any more."

"Well, here's an idea, Mom: why don't you try and get me to marry the Princess of the Pride Lands?" Haiba suggested. "I mean, since you go on and on and on about how you want the war over, I think that would be the best idea."

Amri stared coldly at Haiba. "The Princess of the Pride Lands?" she said, sounding furious. Then, a smile formed on her face. "The Princess of the Pride Lands!" she exclaimed, pointing a claw in the air. "That's it! Haiba, you genius!" She kissed her cub on the forehead.

Haiba smiled in response. "Nice kiss. Can I have another one?"

"You'll have a *lot* of kisses if you can marry the Princess of the Pride Lands," said Amri, a sinister grin forming on her

face. "I can picture it now! The two kingdoms united in one happy family! It'll all be so wonderful!"

"But didn't you say that if you ever united the kingdoms you'd kill the King and—" Amri put a paw over her son's throat, her eyes darting left and right.

"Don't say things you shouldn't, Haiba," Amri told her cub. "You never know who could be listening in."

"But the den is completely empty," Haiba pointed out, gesturing with a paw to the vacant den they were in. "Where is someone going to be listening – through the wall?"

"The Pride Landers are a sneaky little bunch," Amri replied. "You never know what trick they're going to pull out of their manes next."

"Okay, so let me get this straight," said Haiba, waving his forepaws in the air. "You're going to hook me up with the Princess of the Pride Lands – who I assume is very attractive, yet stupid – and I'm going to marry her?"

"Well... the Princess of the Pride Lands isn't exactly... shall we say, *available*," said Amri. "But that's not too much of a problem."

Haiba narrowed his eyes. "And why isn't that a problem? Sounds like a *massive* problem to me."

"It's not a problem because you're going to kidnap her!" Amri proclaimed, a big grin on her face. "You'll sweep her off her paws, and she'll fall instantly in love with you! Then you can be happily married, and the Grand Lands will become united with the Pride Lands, at long last!"

"Sounds pretty dangerous," said Haiba. "How am I going to kidnap her if she puts up a fight? You know, like every *other* cub you've forced on me! Sure, they were cute and all, but they just didn't seem to like me."

"This will be different," Amri assured her cub. "Trust me. Has your dear old mother ever let you down before?"

"Too many times to count, Mom," replied Haiba. "Too many times to count."

Amri grabbed Haiba by the throat, glaring at him angrily. "Now, listen here, you little..." She calmed herself down, and smiled sweetly, putting him down. "*Darling*. Trust me this one more time. You've got nothing else better to do, so why not try it out? What's the worst that could happen?"

"I could die," Haiba replied, before gasping, his eyes widening in horror. "I don't want to die! I haven't had my first kiss yet! And that's what I deserve the *most*!"

"You'll get your first kiss soon, Haiba. As long as you do this in the right way," said Amri.

"And what *is* the right way?" Haiba asked. "Because all of your previous plans have gone up in smoke – quite literally in the case of cub number twenty-three. Poor girl... I never even got a hug that time."

"Look, are you going to do this or not?" Amri was getting impatient now. Her cub was going to kidnap the Princess of the Pride Lands, or the punishment would be severe. "Because if you don't, then I will throw you into a fiery pit of death!"

"Oh, no. Please don't eat me, Mom!" Haiba pleaded. "Your stomach is one fiery pit of death I *never* want to see!"

"So the answer is yes?" presumed Amri.

"I guess so," Haiba replied, looking around. "And who knows... I might even get *two* kisses from this Princess! Or *three*! This could be the day my luck finally changes!"

"Good, Haiba! Good!" Amri exclaimed, chuckling evilly. "No one will be able to resist you! *No one*!"

AN: Prince Haiba is a cheeky little character, isn't he? And so is his mother, for that matter. But anyway, Nala is about to get a big surprise, isn't she? I feel so sorry for her... But do *you*? You could always let me know in a review.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Simba Is More Than Okay

AN: It's time for two more chapters of this exciting story! Will Prince Haiba kidnap Nala? Or worse – will he actually *marry* her? That would be a total disaster...

Chapter Three: Simba Is More Than Okay

"Are you sure you're okay?" Sarabi asked her son for what felt like the million time, following Simba as he walked into the den that night.

"Yes, Mom, I'm okay," Simba replied, for what also felt like the millionth time that day. "You don't need to keep asking me. I'm just fine."

"Are you sure? Have you got a temperature?" Sarabi put a paw over her son's forehead. "Not really – but maybe that's because you're too cold. You might be freezing to death!" she exclaimed, a worried expression on her face.

"Mom, stop acting so worried," said Simba. "Do I look ill? No. I don't. Yesterday was just a one-off thing. It won't happen again." He scratched his head. "I think."

"I just feel very concerned," Sarabi told her cub. "Ever since your father told me about what happened to you yesterday, I can't help but feel worried. It doesn't make sense that you just suddenly changed back. I don't understand it."

"Well, I didn't exactly *suddenly* change back," Simba explained. "It was kinda... different, if you get what I mean."

"Then why don't you tell me the whole story?" asked Sarabi. She smiled at Simba. "It's just that... you seem like you're hiding a lot, Simba. Like there's secrets that you're not telling me. What's so secret that you can't even tell your own mother?"

"It's complicated, Mom," Simba said. "And I mean *really* complicated. You wouldn't believe me if I told you."

"You'd be surprised, Simba," said Sarabi. "Try me."

Simba turned around and walked away. "Maybe some other time. I've got important things to do right now. Important things that require my immediate attention as Prince of the Pride Lands."

"Like kissing your *girlfriend*?" Sarabi teased, dragging out the last word.

Simba turned back to her, and started giggling bashfully, his cheeks turning red. "Well, I... Um... Gotta go!" With that, he dashed off, leaving Sarabi chuckling to herself.

Simba spotted Nala in the corner of the den. She lay on her side, sleeping peacefully. He was about to walk over to her when another voice started speaking to him. "Simba?"

Simba winced, and sighed, before turning around to face his father, Mufasa. "Hey, Dad. What's up?"

"Are you okay?" he asked in a concerned tone.

Simba rolled his eyes, groaning. "What is it with people today asking me if I'm okay or not? I'm fine, Dad. I'm a cub again – not a teenager, not an adult, and *definitely* not an old, weak lion."

"Well, as long as you're sure," said Mufasa. "It was your mother who insisted that I ask you in the first place, so don't go blaming me."

Simba shot a look towards the den entrance, where he could see his mother sheepishly hiding herself away from him. "Yeah... she's been doing that a lot lately. I guess moms just get like that when their cubs almost end up dying of old age." He narrowed his eyes. "I guess that doesn't happen much, though."

"I suggest you take it easy for the time being," Mufasa advised. "I imagine that the events of yesterday have made you more than exhausted."

Simba shrugged. "Ah, not really. You get used to this kind of thing after a while. It hardly surprises me anymore."

"You're saying that you've started rapidly ageing prior to yesterday?" said Mufasa, raising an eyebrow at his son.

Simba chuckled in response, shaking his head. "Nah, nothing like that. I mean danger. I see a lot of it these days. Gives you a rush you wouldn't believe."

"I hope you're not deliberately getting yourself into trouble," said Mufasa, giving Simba a disapproving glare.

"Not exactly," Simba replied. "It's more of a... people-come-up-to-you-and-try-to-kill-you sort of thing. It's not like *I'm* the one causing the trouble. When would I ever do something evil?" He gave his father an innocent smile.

"Very well. Just try not to get yourself killed," said Mufasa.

Simba gave his father one of his cheesy grins. "Don't worry about it! I have *everything* under control!" He turned around and headed towards Nala.

Sarabi joined Mufasa by his side. "Did you ask him for me?"

"Yes, I did," Mufasa replied. "He didn't seem too happy about it. Maybe you should give him a bit of space."

"I'm his mother," Sarabi declared. "I have every right to be concerned for my son. I'm only looking out for him. It's not like he's too old for that."

"He *was* yesterday," Mufasa remarked.

Nala yawned as she awoke, feeling Simba prodding her. "All right, all right, I'm up," she muttered, opening her eyes to see Simba standing over her, a grin on his face. "What do you want, Simba?"

"What are you doing sleeping?" he asked, curious.

Nala yawned again in response. "I'm just feeling a little tired, that's all. Must be one of those days."

"One of those days where you just feel tired all the time?" Simba presumed, resulting in a nod from Nala.

"Yeah – you got it in one, Simba. Right now all I want to do is rest..." She sighed, rolling onto her stomach and closing her eyes again. "And relax."

"I guess growing up yesterday has made me more alert," said Simba. "Because I don't feel tired at all."

"Good for you..." Nala muttered, as she felt herself drifting off to sleep again. "Maybe you're just... lucky..."

It wasn't long before she fell asleep. Simba frowned. "Great. I'm wide awake with nothing to do. A cub like me deserves fun! Preferably all the time!"

Simba sighed, and turned around, walking out of the den. "Maybe I should just take a walk somewhere," he suggested to himself. "That'll clear my head – which hasn't stopped aching ever since yesterday."

Walking out of the den, Simba breathed in the fresh air, looking up at the full moon. Crickets could be heard chirping all around. "Quiet," Simba observed, looking around. "That makes a change."

Simba made his way down Pride Rock, not noticing the darkened figure hiding by the den entrance...

Prince Haiba's eyes darted left and right, making sure that no one had noticed him. It was night in the Pride Lands, making this the best opportunity for him to kidnap the Princess.

Haiba suppressed a gasp as a golden-brown cub walked past him. He quickly darted behind a large rock, just barely avoiding being seen by the cub. Haiba let out a sigh of relief as the cub walked away. *Phew*, he thought. *That was a close one.*

Haiba made sure no one was around, and then stepped out from behind the rock, heading inside the den.

He surveyed the interior of the den. Everyone was asleep. Haiba smiled. *Perfect. It'll be like I was never even here.*

Haiba looked in the corner of the den, and spotted a beautiful cub with creamy fur, who was sleeping quietly. *That must be her. Anyone that beautiful would have to be a princess.* He shrugged. *I guess all I need to do now is... take her.*

Haiba walked further into the den, passing two hyenas on the way, who lay on the ground, snoring loudly. He raised an eyebrow at them. *Hyenas? Seriously? What, does every creature here live in total harmony or something?*

Haiba headed over to Nala, and looked her over. *She's very pretty*, he thought. *She'll make a very good mate*. He took a deep breath. *Here goes nothing*.

He picked Nala up and put her on his back. *Please don't wake up*, he silently urged her. *I'd prefer for you to start shouting when we arrive at the Grand Lands*.

Haiba turned around and headed out of the den, carrying who he hoped would become his mate on his back.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: The Unearthly Voice

Chapter Four: The Unearthly Voice

Simba sat by the edge of the water hole, staring down at his murky reflection in the water. "I look good even in the night," he told himself cockily. "It's just a shame that Nala isn't around to see me."

He sat there in silence, just taking in the peaceful atmosphere. To Simba's surprise, the Pride Lands looked sort of cool in the night. "And to think I used to be scared of the dark," he said with a chuckle. "I can be such a wimp sometimes."

Whoosh! A sudden loud noise made Simba yell in surprise. He leapt forward, diving into the water hole with a big *splash!*

"Whoa!" he exclaimed, coughing and spluttering as he emerged from the water. "What the...? Who's there?" he asked, looking around frantically.

Another loud *whoosh* was heard, coming from behind Simba. He quickly scrambled to the edge, clambering on to dry land. Breathing heavily, he looked around, but couldn't see anything.

And that's when he heard it. "*Kufa... inawadia...*" a distant, rasping voice spoke from behind Simba.

"What?" Simba exclaimed. "Who are you? What does that mean?" He looked all around, but couldn't see anyone. All he could hear was that voice. Whatever it was, it was evil. That was an absolute *certainty*.

"*Kufa... inawadia...*" the voice spoke again, sounding angrier this time. It was as if Simba's speech was angering it – whatever *it* was. "*Kufa... inawadia...*"

"Who is speaking?" Simba demanded, trying to prevent himself from trembling with fear. The voice sounded like the scariest thing Simba had ever heard. It was so terrifying. He could feel his heart pounding in his chest – so fast that he thought it was going to burst out! "Who are you? *Who are you?*"

"*Kufa... inawadia!*" the voice screeched, before letting out a powerful cry, which was so loud that Simba had to cover his ears with his paws, wincing and closing his eyes, thinking that he was going to die there and then.

A few seconds passed, and then...

Silence.

Still breathing heavily, Simba slowly opened his eyes and removed his paws from his ears, looking around the water hole. Nothing had happened. Nothing had changed. Everything was the same.

"What the...?" Simba was lost for words. He put a paw to his chest, feeling how fast his heartbeat was. It was beating so fast that he thought he was going to have a heart attack. "I don't..." Simba took a deep breath, trying to calm himself down. "What the heck was that?"

"Don't worry, my beautiful little thing," said a voice from the other side of the water hole. "You'll be much happier when we get to the Grand Lands. I promise you. After all, you *are* with me."

That's not the same voice, Simba thought, turning around to look across the water hole. *Sounds like a cocky, arrogant cub – but not me. Like... someone ten times worse than me. Yeah. That sounds about right.*

He took a few steps towards the edge of the water hole, struggling to see who was speaking. *Come on!* he urged. *Where are you? Show yourself!*

And then, Simba saw him. Walking past the water hole was a cub with light-brown fur and blue eyes. *Who is that?* Simba asked himself, narrowing his eyes at the cub. *And another thing, who is—*

Simba gasped when he saw who was across the cub's back. *That's Nala*, he realised, his eyes widening in horror. *What's that cub doing with her?* It didn't take him long to become angry. *He's kidnapped her*, he decided, growling with rage. He extended his claws. *But not for long.*

Simba started running, the grass rustling under his paws as he sprinted along. *He's gonna get one big slash in the face for messing with my future Queen! I'm going to shove his tail up his—*

A sudden thought then occurred to Simba, and he skidded to a halt. *Wait a second*, he thought, turning his head to see the cub walk away with Nala. *I don't know anything about this guy. He could be the most deadly cub in the world for all I*

know. A nervous look suddenly appeared on his face. Maybe it's not such a good idea to go running over to him with my claws out.

Simba thought for a moment, and came up with a satisfying plan. *I'll just follow him*, he thought, a sneaky expression on his face. He chuckled mischievously. *I'll find out where he's going, what he's up to, and then I'll swoop in out of nowhere, rescuing Nala like the great hero that I am! He'll never know what hit him!*

Simba then started to slowly walk after the cub, careful not to make the grass rustle too much. He had to be sneaky for this to work. He couldn't let the cub spot him, otherwise his whole plan would be ruined – and it might just even cost Nala her life. Failure wasn't an option.

Simba just hoped that he was as good at being quiet as he was at talking a whole lot.

"Haiba, you are a genius," Haiba told himself as he walked through the Pride Lands, still carrying Nala on his back. "Not only have you managed to get into the Pride Lands without anyone noticing, but you've also managed to kidnap the Princess of the kingdom!" He chuckled. "And then you're gonna marry her!"

He looked back at Nala, and stroked the top of her head softly. "Such a sweet little girl, aren't you?" he said, smiling at her. "Maybe you *won't* be mad at me for stealing you from your home. Who knows? Maybe you hate it here!" he exclaimed. "Or not. But you never know, I might get lucky."

Haiba sighed and shook his head. "I can't believe I'm talking to a sleeping girl. I've had some low points in my life, but it doesn't get much worse than this. Well, aside from that time when Mom made me get kissing lessons... from Uncle Busu." Haiba shuddered. "That's one memory I *don't* want to revisit."

So far, so good, Simba thought as he followed the cub who had Nala on his back. *He hasn't spotted me – yet.*

Simba kept on walking as quietly as he could, keeping his head up so he could focus on the cub. This guy just seemed to be striding along, like there wasn't a care in the world. He wasn't in any kind of rush. Just what was this cub's evil plan? There's always a reason for a kidnapping.

Isn't there?

Suddenly, the cub turned around a little. Stunned, Simba dived behind a nearby bush, hoping that he hadn't been spotted. *Please don't see me, please don't see me*, he thought, closing his eyes as tight as he could.

Slowly, Simba peeked his head around the bush, and saw that the cub was continuing to walk along. *Man, I must be really lucky for him not to have seen me. Either that or he's blind. I guess I can't really tell at the moment.*

Simba stepped out from the bush, and began to follow the cub, wondering how long he was going to be doing this for.

AN: Simba's hot on the trail of Haiba! But what's gonna happen when they arrive at the Grand Lands? And just *what* was up with that strange voice? It's almost as if it's a foreshadowing of something to come later in the series. You could always work out the mystery yourself – provided that you speak Swahili...

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: Nala Gets a Surprise

AN: Time for Nala to get a big surprise. How's she gonna react to Haiba? And good work, guys, some of you have managed to figure out what the cryptic voice was saying in chapter three. Well, *almost*...

Chapter Five: Nala Gets a Surprise

Nala sighed as she awoke, feeling much better than she had the night before. *I haven't felt this relaxed in a long while.* Nala felt someone snuggling up next to her, and smiled. *Of course,* she thought, as a smile spread across her face. *Simba. He always knows how to make me feel like a princess – which I am,* she added with a giggle.

Nala decided to snuggle him back. *His fur feels a bit rougher. I guess he must have been rolling around in the dirt or something. It's kinda strange then he went off having fun without me, but whatever. I'll just wake him up and ask him all about it.*

Nala opened her eyes, and rolled over to find herself staring at a completely different cub. A cub with light-brown fur and small blue eyes. The cub gave her a smile. "Hey, baby," he said.

Nala screamed, backing away as fast as she could. "Not another one!" she screamed, her eyes going wide. "This happened to me yesterday! Who are you, you slimy little creep?"

"Don't be afraid," the cub replied, grinning at Nala as he got to his paws, striding over to her. "You're with me now. Everything's going to be just fine."

"I seriously doubt that," Nala muttered, looking down at the ground. "So come on – who are you? And why have you brought me to—" Nala cut herself off, looking around. She had woken up in some kind of jungle clearing, surrounded by trees on all sides. "Come to think of it, where *am* I?"

"The Grand Lands," the cub informed her, joining Nala by her side. "Nicest pride this side of the savannah. And allow me to introduce myself – I'm Prince Haiba, the future ruler of this kingdom."

"Of course you are," said Nala flatly. "Well, it was nice of you to drag me all the way out here so you could snuggle up to me, but I really must be going."

With that, Nala turned around and walked away, heading across a pile of dead leaves that were on the ground. Suddenly, Nala fell through the leaves, and almost ended up falling into deep pit below. Luckily, Haiba caught her.

"I've got you!" Haiba pulled Nala to safety. "Gotta watch out for those old war traps. There's still a lot of them placed around the kingdom these days. Been meaning to cover them up for a while now, but we've never really gotten round to it."

Nala just stared at Haiba, surprised that he had saved her. "Hello," she finally said, after a long moment of silence.

"Hello," Haiba said back. "I assume you must be the Princess of the Pride Lands – no one that beautiful is just a humble peasant. So, what's your name?"

"Nala," she told him. "I'm flattered by how attractive you find me, but I'm not really interested at the—"

"Nala!" Haiba exclaimed, interrupting her. "What a beautiful name! A beautiful name for a beautiful girl!" He grinned. "Almost as beautiful as me."

"Oh, you are so cocky," said Nala, allowing herself to smile. "You remind me of someone I know – only worse."

"Well..." Haiba's grin only seemed to widen. "Who is that?"

Nala's smile widened at the thought of him. "Oh, he dabbles in royalty himself. Likes a good adventure, and just *loves* almost getting himself killed."

"Oh, I know all about almost getting killed," said Haiba, smiling as a memory popped into his head. "I got sentenced to death once, in this distant pride I went to a while back. It all became kind of blurry after that, but I woke up the next morning with *both* my executioners next to me. Lovely couple. They stayed in touch." He chuckled at her.

Nala just stared at Haiba, wide-eyed, not sure whether to believe him or not. Strangely, a part of her actually *liked* him. He seemed... interesting. "Okay," she said with a nervous laugh. "Great story. Nowhere near as good as my stories."

"Do you get bored back home?" Haiba asked. "Is the poor provincial life there just not enough for you?"

"Poor provincial life?" said Nala, laughing a little. "I may be a princess, but not the kind of one who just wants more and more than she's already got. I'm actually quite happy with my life – even if it is filled with danger a lot of the time."

"So you're saying you're a... bit of a feisty girl?" said Haiba, smiling. He liked Nala already. He'd met a lot of cute girls – and boys – in his life, but Nala ranked up as one of the best.

"Feisty, tough, unbelievably attractive." Nala grinned. "Not afraid to get my paws dirty. In fact, the first day I met my best friend, I almost ended up killing him."

"Him?" Haiba raised an eyebrow. "And who is he when he's not at home?"

"Oh, I'm sure you'll be meeting him very soon," Nala replied, nodding. "He kinda has a bit of a short temper when people kidnap me."

"Look, I only took you away from home because I had to," Haiba explained. "I actually have a very interesting proposition. One that I think you'll find very interesting."

"And what might this proposition be?" Nala asked, narrowing her eyes.

"Well, here's the deal: marry me or my pride goes into a deadly war with your pride," said Haiba. "Sounds kinda mean when you think about it, but I'm not really the best at deals. I usually prefer it when girls just do what I say."

"Marry you?" Nala's eyes widened. She laughed. "I don't think so!"

Haiba looked offended. "Why not? I have to say you've put a big dent in my pride, Nala. I can actually be a very loving mate, if you'll just give me the chance."

Nala shook her head. "I don't think so, Haiba. You're a nice guy and all, but you're just not marrying material. And, I don't exactly know how to tell you this, but I've already—"

Nala cut herself off when a sudden thought occurred to her. *This guy is crazy, she thought. Who knows what he'll do to me if he finds out that Simba is my boyfriend! Maybe I should just... keep that a secret for a little while. At least until Simba rescues me – which I know he will.*

"You've already what?" said Haiba, a confused look on his face.

"Uh... Oh, it's nothing," Nala replied. "Why don't we just take this one step at a time? I normally go on a first date before picking out who I'm going to be spending the rest of my life with."

Haiba smiled. "Fine by me," he said. "Why don't we take a walk through the Grand Lands? I'm sure you'll enjoy the... wonderful scenery – when you're not spending all your time looking at me, of course."

Nala chuckled and nodded. "Yeah!" Nala exclaimed. "Why don't you just... lead the way?"

"I *always* lead the way," Haiba told her. "Especially when I'm kissing," he whispered in her ear.

Haiba walked away, motioning for Nala to follow. *I can't believe this guy, Nala thought as she followed him. He sure is strange – but I can't help but like him. There must be something wrong with me.*

Chapter 6: Chapter 6: Infiltrating the Grand Lands

Chapter Six: Infiltrating the Grand Lands

Simba emerged from a bush, his eyes darting left and right. *Okay. I'm here. It may have taken six hours, and I feel like I'm going to fall asleep any second now, but I'm here. All I need to do now is find Nala, rescue her from that evil cub, and then escape with our lives.* He smiled. *Easy.*

Jumping from the bush, Simba found himself in the middle of a grassy field. This place didn't look too different from the Pride Lands – except for the fact that it was closer to the jungle, and deep pits had been dug in every field. *Just what the heck are all these pits for?* Simba wondered, as he walked by, peering into one of the cavernous holes. He found himself staring down at a pile of bones. *Yikes!* he exclaimed, hurrying away.

"Not very friendly around here," Simba commented as he continued on through the field, noticing that every pit that had been dug out was filled with bones. "Just how are there so many bones in these pits?" He nibbled on one of his claws, a worried look on his face. "I hope they don't kidnap people so they can eat them – otherwise Nala's *really* in danger."

Simba took a few more steps forward, before he was roughly grabbed by the neck, and found himself staring into a pair of menacing green eyes, which belonged to a lioness with a tanned fur coat. "Who are you?" she snarled, not sounding the least bit happy.

"Um... no one," Simba replied, smiling nervously. "Just a stranger. I was just... Um... Admiring what a lovely kingdom you have here."

"It's filled with huge pits full of disgusting bones," the lioness replied, frowning. "It's about as far away from lovely as you can possibly get. Which means you're lying. And I don't take very kindly to liars. Now I'm going to ask you one more time." She tightened her grip on his throat. "*Who are you?*"

"I'm afraid... I... can't tell you... that... right now..." Simba managed to choke out. "It's kinda... personal..."

The lioness smiled. "If you won't tell me, then I'll just have to torture you for the information. Don't worry – I'm very good at tickling."

Simba's eyes widened in fear. "Okay, okay, I'll tell you! Just please don't tickle me!" he pleaded. "I'm... Uh... Simba!"

"Simba?" The lioness narrowed her eyes in thought, dropping Simba to the ground. "I'm sure I've heard of that name from somewhere before..."

"Simba?" He chuckled. "I bet you have. It's a very common name. Most of my friends are called Simba! I wouldn't be surprised if I got *married* to someone called Simba! That's how common it is!"

"Sounds very unique to me," said the lioness, frowning. "It seems very familiar, but I can't quite think of where I've heard it from." She shrugged. "Oh, well. I'm sure it'll come to me by the end of the day. My memory isn't what it used to be."

"So..." Simba chuckled nervously. "Who are you?"

"Who am I?" The lioness looked surprised that Simba didn't know who she was. "I am the Queen of this kingdom! The Queen of the Grand Lands! Queen Amri!" she declared, smiling. "Surely you must have heard of me? My pride is the most popular of them all!"

"But what about the Pride Lands?" Simba asked. He soon regretted it however when Queen Amri became enraged at the mere mention of where Simba lived.

"*What?*" she growled. "How *dare* you mention that wretched kingdom in my presence! I spit on the Pride Landers for everything they've done to me!"

Simba cocked his head to the side, confused. "What do you mean? Why do you hate the Pride Lands so much?"

Amri sighed. "I swear, cubs don't get much of an education any more," she muttered, putting a paw to her face. "The Grand Lands and the Pride Lands have been engaged in a neverending conflict for *decades*! You have no idea how much blood has been split on the ground because of that *awful* war!"

Simba narrowed his eyes. "Not much. You see, I live... *close* to the Pride Lands, and I've never seen any sort of fighting take place."

"Well, you wouldn't have," Amri told him. "There hasn't been a fight in several years. Not since King Mufasa took over from his father. You see, Mufasa's father enjoyed fighting, but his son didn't. His father wanted power – and lots of it. He wanted to control many prides. But then he suddenly died. No one knows why, though. It was very mysterious..."

"So the fighting stopped?" Simba presumed, before giving her a funny look. "Not really much of a neverending war, then, was it?"

"Yes, but it sounds much more epic when you say it like that," Amri replied. "And I intend for this war to start all over again – unless of course my cub did exactly what I told him to last night."

"You have a cub?" said Simba. "What's his name?"

"Haiba," Amri replied. She chuckled. "He's very good with the girls, but I've yet to see him actually get a *girlfriend*. So that's why I asked him last night to kidnap the Princess of the Pride Lands."

"You *what*?" Simba exclaimed, his eyes widening in horror. "Why would you ask him to go and do a thing like that?"

"If Haiba marries the Princess of the Pride Lands, then the war will be officially declared over," Amri explained. "The two kingdoms will be united in one big happy family."

"So you *want* peace?" Simba concluded.

"Well... sort of." Amri looked left and right, before leaning in close to Simba, whispering in his ear. "But between you and me, as soon as the kingdoms are united, I'm going to kill the King and Queen." She snickered sinisterly. "That way I'll be the ruler of *two* prides!" She grinned widely. "The only lioness to have ever done such a thing! I'll be remembered for ever!" She laughed evilly. "Actually, it kind of brings a tear to my eye."

"Isn't killing the King and Queen kind of... mean?" Simba asked, trying to hide the fact that he was seriously worried now. Not only had Nala been kidnapped by a cub who wanted to marry her, but his parents' lives were at stake as well!

"Who cares? Years ago that war caused a lot of bloodshed! Many brave lions lost their lives!" said Amri.

"Did your mate die in the war?" Simba asked.

"No, of course not. He was eaten by a hungry rhinoceros," Amri responded.

Simba had a dumbfounded look on his face. *Man, this place is weird.*

"So, what do you do for fun around here?" Nala asked Haiba, as the two of them walked along the edge of a long, winding river that ran right through the middle of the Grand Lands.

Haiba shrugged. "I don't really have too much time to myself," he admitted. "Mostly because Mom is always trying to get me married to someone. None of the cubs she shoves in my face never really seem to like me, though. See this cheek?" Haiba pointed to his left cheek. "It's redder than my other cheek. That's because I get slapped on it all the time."

"If it makes you feel any better, I don't feel like slapping you yet," Nala told him. "And besides, when someone makes me mad, I tend to claw their faces off rather than slap them. Kinda hurts more," she added with a laugh. "So do you like living here?"

"No," Haiba replied. "Not really. I feel like... there's more out there, you know? More for me to see. If I'm honest, I'd *love* to get out of here. Get away from everyone. It'd be great."

"Can't say I don't agree," said Nala, looking around. *Come on, Simba. Where are you?* "But you still want to marry me?"

"Why not? You're the best out of all the girls I've ever seen. And some of the boys," he added, giving her a sneaky wink.

Nala couldn't help but laugh. "You really are a sleaze."

"I get that a lot," Haiba told her, chuckling.

"I bet you do," Nala replied, smiling. "You are one weird guy, Haiba. I couldn't see myself marrying you in a million years."

"So who *would* you like to marry?" Haiba asked, genuinely interested. "What kind of guy is your... type?"

Technically, I'm already married. Sort of... Nala thought, before answering Haiba. "Someone cute. To be honest, I *hate*

those cubs who strut all around the place with big muscles hanging out. I like someone fun and adventurous – but thin. And of course, they have to like hugging and snuggling and all other kinds of adorable, romantic things."

"Well, I don't know about muscles hanging out, but I can show you some fun things that'll blow your mind," said Haiba, grinning.

"I wouldn't really be surprised."

AN: Nala actually *likes* Haiba? Preposterous! Where could all this be possibly going? Oh, well, I'm sure you lovely readers will find out sooner or later. If you care, that is. For all I know, you could all be playing some kind of cruel joke on me to make me believe I'm actually *good* at this writing stuff. But whatever. Leave your interesting reviews on the way out.

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: Love and War

AN: Will Nala marry Haiba, or can Simba rescue her? The suspense must be killing you.

Chapter Seven: Love and War

"... So that's when I fell in love with a plant, and needless to say she didn't really say all that much to me," said Haiba, telling Nala another one of his wild stories. "It was a very one-sided relationship."

"You are a *seriously* desperate guy, Haiba," said Nala, smiling and shaking her head. "I can't believe I'm even hearing this."

"If you think that's amazing then just *wait* until you hear about my first date with a stick," Haiba replied with a smile. "She was surprisingly creative. But then that's nothing compared to my first date with *myself*..."

Nala laughed. "You are so weird. For some reason, I can't help but like you. It's very strange..."

"Good." Haiba grinned at her. "So let's get married."

"Okay, maybe I should rephrase this: I like you as a *friend*," Nala told him. "You're not exactly my type. And besides, I've already got a boyfriend." Nala then gasped, realising what she had said.

Haiba's eyes widened. "You *have*?" he exclaimed, raising his eyebrows. "Well, I can't really say I'm surprised. I mean, a beautiful girl like you must have *thousands* of guys fighting for your attention."

Nala narrowed her eyes at him. "Not exactly... But you're not mad?" she said, sounding a little surprised.

"Me? Mad?" Haiba laughed. "You've gotta be kidding. If we got married then I wouldn't be very faithful, if I'm honest. There's millions of cubs and only one Haiba." He winked at her. "Gotta catch 'em all."

"You should see the Pride Lands," said Nala. "They've got too many cubs to count. Most of them are jerks, though. I think they hated me before I even said a word to them."

"But aren't you the Princess?" Haiba said, narrowing his eyes. "I thought the Princess of the Pride Lands would have too many friends to count."

"Surprisingly not," Nala replied. "They didn't even like Simba – and he was the Prince before I even *became* the Princess."

"Simba? Fruity name he's got. Is that your boyfriend?" Haiba asked.

Nala nodded and smiled. "Yep. Charming, kind, and has a great tuft of fur on top of his head."

"Nice description," Haiba commented. "Can't wait to meet him. I think my chances with him are zero, though."

"Yeah. I don't think he'd go for you," Nala joked. She looked around. "It makes me wonder where he is. He should have rescued me by now."

"I just hope he hasn't met my mother," said Haiba. "She can be *really* nasty when it comes to intruders."

"Well, it was very nice to meet you, Simba," said Amri, as she and Simba walked away from the Grand Lands together. "Come back any time you want. We could use more visitors."

Simba chuckled. "I'll keep that in mind," he said. "Just next time be a little more friendly when you first greet me. No more throat grabbing – okay?"

"I apologise for my rudeness. It's just that most of the intruders here aren't exactly friendly," Amri explained. "For all I know, you could have been a cub hell-bent on killing us all!" She laughed, and Simba laughed along with her.

"Yeah. That wouldn't be good!" he exclaimed, and they laughed even harder. *Man, I've gotta get out of here.*

"Or worse – you could have come to steal my cub's future mate!" Amri joked, laughing even harder – so much that she was rolling about on the ground. "That would be so hilarious!"

"Yeah..." Simba quickly dashed away, leaving Amri on her own, as she continued to laugh, like it was the funniest joke she'd ever heard.

Simba hid behind a tree on the outskirts of the jungle, surveying his surroundings. *Nala's gotta be around here somewhere*, he decided. *If I can find her without being seen by the Queen, then I'll be fine. Well, unless her cub turns out to be just as bloodthirsty as her.* He sighed. *I hope not.*

"How far away am I from the Pride Lands?" Nala asked Haiba, as they walked through a grassy field together.

"Not too far," Haiba replied. "Maybe an hour – at the most. We're pretty close together – that's why there was a war in the first place. They kept fighting over whether both kingdoms should belong to one king or not. The Grand Lands wanted their independence. The Pride Lands *didn't* want them to have their independence. And so the fighting went on and on. Until Mufasa became the King, and that was the end of it, really."

"And there hasn't been a fight since?" said Nala.

Haiba shook his head. "Nope. But my mother will make sure there *is* more fighting unless you marry me. And right now I think that's where things are heading."

"Can't you convince your mother not to fight?" Nala asked, a hopeful look on her face.

Haiba shook his head. "Not really. She's pretty stubborn. If she asks for something, then she gets it. She developed a hunger for power ever since my Dad got eaten by a hungry rhinoceros. In fact, even if I *did* marry you, she'd kill the King and Queen of the Pride Lands – so she could have both kingdoms all to herself."

"That's horrible!" Nala exclaimed, her eyes widening. "So peace just isn't enough for her?"

"I doubt it. Like I said – she's power hungry. When she's got something in her head, she won't let anyone stop her. Not even her own son." Haiba then gave her a sly look. "But... there is just a little chance that... I can stop all this from happening."

Nala leaned in close. "How?" she asked. "Tell me."

"Well—" Suddenly, Haiba heard a rustling sound from behind him, and turned around to see a golden-brown cub emerging from a bush. *Hey, that's the cub who walked past me last night*, he realised.

"Simba!" Nala cried, rushing over to him and giving him a tight hug. "I just *knew* you'd find me!"

Simba hugged her back. "Yeah. It took me hours, but I did it! Are you okay? Are you hurt?"

Nala shook her head. "No. I'm fine."

Haiba strode over to Simba and shook him by the paw. "You must be Simba. Nice to meet you. I've heard all about you. Cute tuft, by the way. I should get me one of those."

"Sorry, who are you?" Simba asked.

"Prince Haiba," Haiba introduced himself. "But not for long, if I have my way."

"So *you're* the one who kidnapped Nala," Simba concluded, shooting Haiba an angry look. "I should tear your head off right now."

"Hey, it wasn't my fault," Haiba told him. "Blame my mother. She made me do all of this."

"Yeah, he's not exactly the bad guy here," Nala explained, pointing to Haiba. "He's actually pretty nice when you get to know him."

"How do you know he's not lying?" Simba asked. "This could all be part of one big trap."

"I trust him," Nala replied. "He reminds me of you – only slightly more messed up."

"I got dropped on the head when I was a baby," Haiba explained. "My mind is kind of... slanted."

Simba gave him a funny look. "Right. Well, nice to meet you, Haiba, but we really must be going. Come on, Nala." Simba started to pull Nala away.

"Simba, wait," said Nala, stopping him from going any further.

"Nala, we've gotta go. Did you know that this pride was at war with our pride a few years ago?" Simba asked.

"Yes, Haiba told me all about. If I don't marry him then the war will start all over again," Nala explained. "And even if I do then the Queen will kill your Mom and Dad."

Simba nodded. "So you were told the same story as I was."

"By who?" Nala asked.

"By the Queen herself," Simba responded. "So if we leave, we're doomed. But if we stay, we're still doomed." He scratched his head. "Boy, this is kinda tricky, isn't it?"

"Aha!" Haiba exclaimed, pointing a claw in the air. "I've got a plan. But I think we're gonna need my mother."

"I should have known!" a voice shouted from beside the three cubs. Simba, Nala and Haiba turned to see Amri standing a few feet away from them, an angry look on her face. "Haiba, just what do you think you're doing?"

"Mom, just let me explain, I—" Haiba began, before his mother cut him off.

"I don't want to hear another word out of you!" Amri interrupted. "And why aren't you married to the Princess of the Pride Lands yet? And what is that cub doing over there? I thought he left!"

"Oh, that's just Prince Simba," Haiba replied.

"*Prince* Simba?" Amri shouted. "I thought I knew that name from somewhere... I remember now. He's the *Prince* of the Pride Lands! He's come here to try and rescue his precious future Queen!" She extended her claws. "Not if I have anything to say about it!"

"Mom, Mom, just chill for a second," said Haiba, trying to get her to calm down. "Let's talk about this – like responsible cubs."

Amri seemed to calm down a little bit. "All right, then, Haiba. But only because you're my son. Now tell me – why aren't you married to her yet?"

"Well... she's kind of already *got* a boyfriend. Why else would she be the Princess in the first place?" Haiba explained. "And – just like all the other cubs I've met – she doesn't find me marrying material. You know me – I'm a free spirit. Marriage isn't exactly my thing."

"But the war!" Amri cried, her eyes widening. "If you don't marry her then we will be doomed to conflict for centuries!"

"But Mom, you're going to kill the King and Queen," Haiba reminded her. "I think that's a bit *too* extreme, if you ask me. Why can't you just let bygones be bygones?"

"But we *deserve* to be a part of the Pride Lands!" Amri continued. "It's rightfully ours!"

"No – *this* kingdom is rightfully ours," Haiba corrected her. "We have a great little pride here. Why spoil it by going back into a war? You'll just make things a whole lot worse."

"But what about our independence?" Amri retorted.

"We've *got* independence," Haiba replied. "Ever since Mufasa became King of the Pride Lands, everything's been pretty much fine. Sure, there are a few of those old war pits here, but you can fill them in again – I've been telling you to do that for ages now. But you're so focused on this that you never take the time to listen."

Amri stared into her cub's eyes, and realised that what he was saying was right. Hanging her head low, she sighed. "I know," she admitted. "It's just that... ever since your father died I feel like we should have more."

"We've got enough already," Haiba told her. "You're the Queen! What more could you ask for?"

"I was just trying to make things better," said Amri, frowning. "That's all."

"Things are fine the way they are," Haiba assured her. "Trust me. When have we ever had a problem before?"

"You're right," Amri agreed, nodding. "This war was pointless in the first place. It wasn't like we *wanted* it. It wasn't even

my fault. I didn't start it."

"But you can end it," Simba chimed in. "You can stop it. Just say that we don't have to fight any more."

"It's the right thing to do," Nala insisted.

Amri took a deep breath, and decided to do the right thing. "Then I declare that the war is over," she proclaimed. "No more fighting. *Ever*."

Simba and Nala breathed sighs of relief. Haiba just smiled at his mother. "Thanks, Mom."

Amri smiled. "Any time, Haiba. Any time."

"Well..." said Simba, as he and Nala slowly slinked away. "I guess we'd better be going now."

"Wait," Haiba called, turning to them. "I did that for you. But now you have to do something for me."

Simba narrowed his eyes at Haiba. "What?"

"Take me with you," Haiba revealed, causing Simba and Nala to become quickly surprised. "It sure sounds like you two get up to a lot. All that excitement, all that danger. I want to be a part of it," he told them. "So..." He looked back and forth between the two. "Have you got room for one more cub?"

"But Haiba..." said Amri, joining her cub by his side. "Your home is here. What about me?"

Haiba looked up at his mother. "I want to do something different, Mom," he explained. "And this is a rare chance for that. This will always be my home, but... I need to have my own life."

Amri smiled down at her son. "Very well. As long as you're careful."

Haiba hugged her. "I'll come back to visit. I promise."

"I know you will, and I'll be very mad if you don't." Amri kissed Haiba on the forehead. "Go on, then. Go have that adventure you've been wanting."

He grinned. "Nice kiss. Can't wait for the next one." And with that, he bounded off, walking away from the field with Simba and Nala.

Amri watched her son leave with tears in her eyes. *I'm so proud of you.*

"Here we are," Simba declared, pointing at Pride Rock with a claw. "Welcome to Pride Rock."

"It's a lot bigger than I thought it was," said Haiba, looking up at it.

"You'd better be."

"I think what Simba's trying to say is... welcome to your new home," Nala chimed in, smiling at Haiba.

"Looks like it's not just us after all, then," Simba noted, reminding Nala of the conversation he had earlier, gesturing to Haiba. "Looks like we're not freaks."

Nala shook her head. "No." She giggled. "We're even freakier."

Haiba grinned at the two, knowing that his life had just become very interesting indeed.

The End

AN: Aw! That bit at the end was so sad! Poor Amri! But anyway, Haiba's joined the gang! Don't worry – he won't steal Nala from Simba. I promise. Honestly. You can trust me, can't you?

NEXT TIME: Simba, Nala and Haiba accidentally injure an old lion, simply known as 'Frank'. They resolve to look after him until he's feeling better, but find out that it's a lot more challenging than they first thought...